

THE NUMBER OF THE BEAST traces its origin back to the New Testament book of *Revelation* which is presumed to have been composed by John the Divine,¹ sometime late in the reign of the Roman Emperor Domitian (81–96).²

“There is need for shrewdness here: if anyone is clever enough he may interpret the number of the beast: it is the number of a man, the number 666.” [REVELATION XIII: 18]

The last book in the Bible and only apocalyptic work in the New Testament, *Revelation* remains more “unintelligible” than any other Biblical account. “This is largely because it abounds in symbolism of a type that we do not use and to which we no longer possess the key.”³

Scholars have long sought to recover this key through the practice of numerology, or number mysticism. Driven by the suspicion that Biblical numbers such as the Number of the Beast, might represent the names of historical figures in cipher, they have appropriated or confabulated a variety of artificial systems equating letters with numbers, in their attempts to identify them (Kabbalah remaining one of the more elastic of these systems).⁴

Bishop of Lyon, Irenaeus (130–202) was the first we know to have sought the identity of the Beast in this manner, arriving at three possible culprits – Evanthes, Lateinos and Teitan – by employing the Hellenic alphabetic numerals. Which reveals, at least, that an explanation for the Number of the Beast had not circulated with the earlier traditions of the Church.

Eventually the theologians came to believe that the Beast with seven heads and ten horns, in all probability refers to

¹ “To this island [Patmos] the apostle John was banished from Ephesus, evidently for some months about the year AD 95, and here he wrote his *Revelation* (REV 1: 9).” [New Bible Dictionary, p884]

² “...attested by a number of ancient authors, such as Irenaeus and Eusebius, who state categorically that the book was written in the time of Domitian.” [New Bible Dictionary, p1028]

³ New Bible Dictionary, p1027

⁴ there are in fact several distinct systems of Cabalistic interpretation

“a succession of seven Roman emperors; [while the] ten crowned horns are ten subject kings”.⁵

But the Number of the Beast has eluded decipherment: “Codes and riddles were made in both Greek and Hebrew by using numbers for letters, according to their order in the alphabet. Some commentators have claimed that 666 is the total of the number values of ‘Nero Cæsar’”.⁶ Others have worked the numbers to exhume Martin Luther,⁷ Emperor Napoleon,⁸ ‘euporia’ the ancient Greek term for “wealth”,⁹ and a host of complementary numerological *bêtes noires*.¹⁰

Mathematicians too, examined the Number of the Beast, largely to dismiss the number mystics, but also to see if they might not detect in it a product, quotient or sum of related measures. Many of these investigations focused on magic squares, while others looked to prime numbers or the Fibonacci sequence for clues.¹¹ Yet the puzzle remained unsolved.

MY SOLUTION, as will here be divulged, invites a radical interpretation of all Biblical figures.

The Number of the Beast is a mathematical sum – not a numerological figment – involving the Roman numerals. There were only seven – seven letters of the alphabet which doubled as numbers:

I (1); **V** (5); **X** (10); **L** (50); **C** (100); **D** (500); **M** (1000).

The first six of these numerals add up to 666. While the numeral **M** (1000) is figuratively focal to the ‘millennial’ references in the succeeding verses of *Revelation*.

⁵ REVELATION XIII: 11 – note g

⁶ REVELATION XIII: 18 – note i

⁷ PETER BUNGUS, *Numerorum Mysteria* (1584: BERGAMO)

⁸ LEO TOLSTOY, *War and Peace* (1865–8: MOSCOW)

⁹ JOHN TAYLOR, *Wealth: The Name and Number of the Beast* (1844: UK)

¹⁰ DAVID THOM, *The Number and Names of the Apocalyptic Beasts* (1848: LONDON)

¹¹ JOHN NAPIER, *Plain Discovery of the Whole Revelation of St John* (1593) [cf. DUDLEY, *Numerology or, What Pythagoras Wrought*, pp67–73]

“Then I saw an angel come down from heaven with the key of the Abyss in his hand and an enormous chain. He overpowered the dragon, that primeval serpent which is the devil and Satan, and chained him up for 1000 years. He threw him into the Abyss, and shut the entrance and sealed it over him, to make sure he would not deceive the nations again until the thousand years had passed. At the end of that time he must be released, but only for a short while.” [REVELATION XX: 1–3]

The narrative cryptically refers to the ancient model of the lunation, which featured seven conspicuous lunar phases¹² amid a welter of unidentifiable spectres – the seven Roman numerals according conveniently with these focal phases.

The seventh numeral, accordingly, designates waning crescent – the last visible phase in the sky before the moon descends into the abyss for two dark nights. Characterized as an angel who chains the serpent up for 1000 years, the crescent held ‘the key’ to unlock the underworld gates precisely because it is the last phase visible on high prior to the submergence of the lunation.

‘A thousand years’ alludes to the seventh or final phase – whose duration is a single night, not 1000 years – through an ordinal correlation: both ‘M’ (1000) and waning crescent comprising the seventh figure in their respective models.¹³

Earlier in antiquity, the focal phases of the lunation had been identified as gods:¹⁴ WAXING CRESCENT Egyptian *Horus*, Greek *Ares*; WAXING HALF-MOON *Thoth*, *Hermes*; FIRST FULL MOON *Amon*, *Apollo*; SECOND FULL MOON

¹² [3] waxing crescent; [9] waxing half-moon; [15] first full moon; [16] second full moon; [17] first waning phase; [23] waning half-moon; [29/30] waning crescent – ordinals referring to the usual nights in the lunation when these seven focal spectres appear [cf. DRUMBOLIS, *Instructions for Restoring the Ancient Wisdom*, pp19/20]

¹³ “Kepler used symbols analogous to I, v, x, l, but instead of the numbers one, five, ten and fifty he selected one, three, nine, twenty-seven, and so on. In this way he expressed any whole number very economically; for instance, $20 = 27 - 9 + 3 - 1$.” *emphasis added* [TURNBULL, *The Great Mathematicians*, p76]

¹⁴ cf. DRUMBOLIS, *Myth as Math*, pp55–7

Ra, Zeus; FIRST WANING PHASE *Set, Poseidon*; WANING HALF-MOON *Ptah, Hephaestus*; WANING CRESCENT *Osiris, Hades/Pluto*. But with the rise of Monotheism they had to be reassigned as angels.¹⁵

The enormous chain in which the terminal phase binds the serpent, links all the spectres of the lunation together. The serpent which was thought to inhabit the underworld, was envisioned as having taken the moon captive during its two-night absence from the sky (when the serpent – “released, but only for a short while [two nights]” – had assumed the vacant throne of the rightful ruler of night).

The sum of the first six Roman numerals was ascribed to the Beast only after the first six focal phases had had their night – the final phase, waning crescent, alone left to keep him from consuming the entire lunation. The Beast had swallowed the first six focal phases, digesting a sum of 666.

NAMES COMPOSED OF LETTERS which double as numbers, lead inevitably to the suspicion that Biblical names might all have been conceived as ciphers.¹⁶ Exciting a systematic search for numerate insights into the more enigmatic texts of the Bible (*gematria*). Which remain incomprehensible because the model upon which they are based has never before now been correctly identified.

While earlier forms of the Roman numerals have been conjectured,¹⁷ it is the system’s limit of seven components and Latin term for “thousand” – the acrophonic ‘mille’ – which invite the parallel. Considering date of composition

¹⁵ SEVEN ANGELS: *Uriel, Michael, Raguel, Raphael, Sariel, Remiel, Gabriel* – still divine but now expressly God’s messengers (their letters of the alphabet having been drawn from the lunation: see, *God’s Wand*)

¹⁶ eg. ‘LVCI[fer]’ or “light-bringer” – associated variously with the moon and Venus; the Roman numerals comprising the Number of the Beast, may also be arrayed to juggle up the Latin ‘LVCID[e] x’ or “no light” (examples tendered hypothetically, solely to illustrate the process)

¹⁷ initially by “...T. Mommsen (1840) and E. Hübner (1885)...” [IFRAH, *The Universal History of Numbers*, p187]

of *Revelation*, the contemporaneous development of the complete system of Roman numerals further supports its adoption as a parallel in these passages.¹⁸

And, notably, the name¹⁹ and nature²⁰ of the Beast both accommodate a calendrical theme.

THE BOOK OF REVELATION contains numerous details which accord with the calendrical hypothesis.

“When the thousand years are over [when waning crescent is extinguished], Satan will be released from his prison [the dark lord of the underworld presiding over the two nights of darkness between crescents] and will come out to deceive all the nations in the four quarters of the earth [worldwide], Gog and Magog [first and second dark nights], and mobilize them for war. His armies will be as many as the sands of the sea [underworld desert intimating desertion from on high, the moon submerged in the underworld]; they will come swarming over the entire country [of the lunation] and besiege the camp of the saints, which is the city that God loves [heaven]. But fire [waxing crescent characterized in Egypt as Horus the Avenger] will come down on them from heaven and consume them.” [REVELATION XX: 7–9]

¹⁸ Known instances of the use of *L*, *D* and *M* as numerals do not go back much farther than the first century AD. To the best of my knowledge, the oldest Roman inscription using *L* for 50 dates from 44 BC [*Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum* VOL I, inscription 594]. The oldest known use of *M* and *D* as numerals is in a Latin inscription dated 89 BC [*Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum* VOL IV, inscription 590], in which the number 1500 appears as *MD*.” [IFRAH, *From One to Zero*, p131]

¹⁹ *therion* “wild animal; beast; wolf”; cf. Cerberus, an underworld canine; also, Cynus, the designation for the Greek 8-year calendar – ‘great-year measures’ categorically associated with the underworld both because they weren’t in evidence on high through observation, and they periodically required intercalary adjustments – phantom or (ghostly) underworld days added to a completed calendar cycle to postpone the start of a new calendar cycle until the natural cycles had returned to their respective starting points [New Bible Dictionary, p128]

²⁰ *monster* “imaginary animal compounded of incongruous elements, eg. centaur, sphinx, griffin” [OED, p783]; cf. lunisolar calendar compounded to reconcile incongruous cycles: solar and lunar [moonster]

The angels at the four corners of the earth holding the four winds of the world back²¹ accord with the four focal lunar phases at the 'corners' of the lunation – opposing crescents and twin full moons – when ordered about a compass.²²

"Then I saw another angel rising where the sun rises, carrying the seal of the living God; he called in a powerful voice to the four angels whose duty was to devastate land and sea. 'Wait before you do any damage on land or at sea or to the trees, until we have put the seal on the foreheads of the servants of our God.' Then I heard how many were sealed: 144,000, out of all the tribes of Israel." [REVELATION VII: 2-4]

A sum which harbours calendrical significance. The sons of Israel numbered 601,730 before crossing the River Jordan into the Promised Land.²³ Thus 457,730 of them²⁴ were left unprotected. A number which conceals a calculation for the length of the mean lunation – to within 33 seconds.²⁵

This is all the more remarkable because, as I have shown in an earlier work,²⁶ the number 601,730 also relinquishes another dramatic quotient illustrating the improvement of the Hebrew year over that of the Egyptians.

²¹ REVELATION VII: 1

²² cf. DRUMBOLIS, *Instructions for Restoring the Ancient Wisdom*, p20 – the lunation conceivably 'turned' at those flexures 'by the winds'

²³ NUMBERS XVI: 51

²⁴ $601,730 - 144,000 = 457,730$

²⁵ $457,730 \div 15,500 = 29.530967$ which is 32.7456 seconds longer than the mean lunation as calculated today: 29.530588 days. The product of 15,500 mean lunations as calculated today is 457,724.11 days – 6 days short of 457,730. Which appears to be why the author(s) of *Revelation* designated this sum of six Roman numerals as Satanic – six of the 457,730 days in their calculation being confined to the underworld.

²⁶ $601,730 \div 122,100 = 4.9281736282$ which represents the number of the Sons of Israel from the remaining two tribes of Judah and Benjamin, divided into the number of the twelve tribes. $4.9281736282 \times 365.25 = 1800$ which is also the product of five Egyptian years of 360 days; or in other words, the Hebrew refinement of a 365.25-day calendar converges at this multiple of 4.9281736282 years, with five Egyptian years, dramatizing the improvement over the correlative Egyptian measure. [DRUMBOLIS, *Instructions for Restoring the Ancient Wisdom*, p67]

"Then I was given a long cane as a measuring rod, and I was told, 'Go and measure God's sanctuary, and the altar, and the people who worship there; but leave out the outer court and do not measure it, because it has been handed over to pagans – they will trample on the holy city for 42 months. But I shall send my two witnesses to prophesy for those 1260 days, wearing sackcloth'" [REVELATION XI: 1-3]

The measure involved is readily recognizable as the 30-day Egyptian month.²⁷ Two passages in a later chapter confirm that these 1260 days were reckoned as 3½ Egyptian years of 360 days.²⁸

In a lunar thesis, a period in the desert directs attention to the interval of darkness separating waning and waxing crescent – 3 daytimes and 2 night-times. Thus, a period of 1260 'days in the desert' comprises 504 dark intervals of 2½ days (2½ notably one-twelfth of 30).²⁹

Which involves 504 *lunations*. But the text specifies the 30-day *month*. Thus, 504 months of thirty days accumulate 15,120 days.³⁰ Dividing 15,120 by 360 (the number of days in the year specified) establishes an extrapolation of 42 years of 12 months of 30 days.³¹

Meanwhile 42 Egyptian months harbour 105 'dead' days in the desert.³² Which conveniently amount to 3½ Egyptian months.³³

These figures relating to the outer court of the *sanctuary* – the only portion afforded measures – clearly accord with the dark interval of the mean *lunation*.

²⁷ $1260 \div 42 = 30$

²⁸ the pregnant woman *standing on the moon*, with a crown of 12 stars, who escapes into the desert for 1260 days following the birth of her son with the serpent in pursuit "where she was to be looked after for a year and twice a year and half a year" [REVELATION XII: 1-6; 13/4];

²⁹ $360 \times 3.5 = 1260$

³⁰ $1260 \div 2.5 = 504$ ('wearing sackcloth' not far removed from 'in a sack')

³¹ $504 \times 30 = 15,120$

³² $15,120 \div 360 = 42$

³³ $42 \times 2.5 = 105$

³³ $105 \div 30 = 3.5$ [$3.5 \times 12 = 42$; $105 \times 12 = 1260$]

“These are the two olive trees and the two lamps that stand before the Lord of the world. Fire can come from their mouths and consume their enemies if anyone tries to harm them; and if anybody does try to harm them he will certainly be killed in this way. They are able to lock up the sky so that it does not rain as long as they are prophesying; they are able to turn water into blood and strike the whole world with any plague as often as they like. When they have completed their witnessing, the beast that comes out of the Abyss is going to make war on them and overcome them and kill them. Their corpses will lie in the main street of the Great City known by the symbolic names Sodom and Egypt, in which their Lord was crucified. Men out of every people, race, language and nation will stare at their corpses, for 3½ days, not letting them be buried, and the people of the world will be glad about it and celebrate the event by giving presents to each other, because these two prophets have been a plague to the people of the world. After the 3½ days, God breathed life into them and they stood up, and everybody who saw it happen was terrified; then they heard a loud voice from heaven say to them, ‘Come up here,’ and while their enemies were watching, they went up to heaven in a cloud. Immediately there was a violent earthquake, and a tenth of the city collapsed; 7000 persons were killed in the earthquake, and the survivors, overcome with fear, could only praise the God of heaven.” [REVELATION XI: 4–13]

The corpses of two prophets lying in the main street of the Great City for 3½ days, invite multiplication: $2 \times 3\frac{1}{2} = 7$ (the seven focal lunar spectres). The Great City represents ‘great-year’ cycle: both the Egyptian 25-year lunar measure and the Hebrew 8-year calendar. Main street of the Great City is the *lunar cycle*. The ‘7000 consumed by earthquake’ represent the product of the seventh focal, or terminal, phase of the lunation (waning crescent) with its Roman numeral ascription: $7 \times 1000 = 7000$.

The final spectre in the lunation descends into the earth as into a fissure opened by a quake. The tenth of the ‘city’ (or 30-day month) computes the 3-day dark interval.

DESPITE THE EVIDENCE scholars maintain that numbers can be made to support any thesis – even those who know the difference between mathematics and numerology.

“It is very difficult to know whether there is anything of value in these theories about counting the markings on bones or stones. Numbers can be arranged in so many possible ways and there is also the risk that people in search of certain patterns discard or ignore bones or rocks that bear other numbers of markings, leaving them with only the specially selected ones that they think provide evidence for whatever theory they want to prove.” [ACZEL, *The Cave and the Cathedral*, pp165/6]³⁴

Yet none of the numbers in the foregoing portions from the book of *Revelation* have been satisfactorily explained – the generic glosses from the editors of the *Jerusalem Bible* contending, for instance, that the 7000 merely represent “a great number of all classes”.³⁵ Or that the 144,000 marked with God’s seal signify little more than “twelve (the sacred number) squared and multiplied by 1000, representing the totality of the faithful” referring to a core 12,000 from each of the twelve tribes of Israel.³⁶ Not the slightest insight into the reason for so many explicit and expansive numbers.

The magnitude of ‘coincidence’ scholars would have you categorically dismiss rather than consider a hypothesis like mine, where so many of the numbers have been explained with the same model, is far from slender. If numbers *can* be so easily “arranged in so many possible ways” how is it that no one in all these years has ventured an explanation of Biblical numbers based on ‘coincidences’ with models other than the lunation? That is, without stooping to ciphers. The Number of the Beast, like all the other numbers cited, clearly does become coherent reflecting the lunation.

³⁴ Palaeolithic stones and bones bearing lunar counts were the dominant focus of an extensive study by Alexander Marshack, *The Roots of Civilization: The Cognitive Beginnings of Man’s First Art, Symbol and Notation* (1972) MCGRAW-HILL, NEW YORK

³⁵ REVELATION XI: 13 – note g

³⁶ REVELATION VII: 4 – note c

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